



MY DHAKA

ONE ACT OF KINDNESS a day keeps sadness away

RBR

An act of kindness a day is what mental health counsellors suggest we do; we, the ones who find it difficult to navigate through life's unforeseen situations. It can be something as trivial as leaving a bowl of water out for the birds, or buying something to eat/drink for the little girl selling jasmine garlands at traffic signals to make ends meet.

Dhaka is an extremely fast-paced city. Our exposure to different cultures has sort of melded together and created a concept of modern life that we all try our best to live. However, with modernism comes all types of side effects, like living up to high expectations for yourself and from society, the peer pressure that exists in social circles, all of the mental stresses of the 'mundane' every day, and so on.

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A group of men offering free drinks to people amid the heatwave in April. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

be a hero, unsung perhaps, but one that gives us a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment.

Dhakaïtes, in their mean fight for survival, did not forget kindness. A friend of mine has a paper carton at the local mudir dokan (neighbourhood

grocery shop) which is always full of biscuit packets, candies, or tetra pack drinks. The idea is that whenever she buys something from the shop, she adds a pack of edibles to that carton, and instructs the shopkeeper to donate it to street children, elderly beggars, and

others who might need it. This single kind gesture of hers has inspired many others in her social circle to follow suit.

I know another person who bought mineral water bottles for rickshaw pullers during the heatwave, or treated them to an ice lolly. She even handed out umbrellas to her community guards, as they were on duty at street corners without any shade.

There are also people who give away big jerry cans full of glucose drinks to local mosques during this scorching summer. You may have seen some houses have a tap placed outside their premises. The reasoning for this is to give thirsty rickshaw pullers, or any exhausted passers-by access to clean filtered water. In Gulshan, there was a house that had a big, black terracotta motka (pitcher) with a tin mug for people to drink cool water.

These small acts of kindness give us a meaning to why we work so hard, and a healthy way to not let anxiety, stress, fretfulness, nervousness consume us. An act of kindness impacts on your self-esteem, empathy, and compassion, and also addresses our mood swings. So, for this month, make it a point to do one act of kindness per day, and your conscience will thank you for it.

Man gets life term for throwing acid on woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A Faridpur court yesterday sentenced a man to life term imprisonment for throwing acid on a woman after she rejected his advances in 2019.

The convict is Sujan Kumar Hawlader, 30, of Beleshwar village under Madhukhali upazila. Judge Shihabul Islam of Faridpur 2nd Additional District and Sessions Court handed down the verdict in the presence of the convict, said Sanwar Hossain, acting public prosecutor.

According to the prosecution, Sujan threw acid on the victim when she was cooking at home around 6:30pm on November 16, 2019.

Police arrested Sujan after the victim's brother-in-law filed a case with Madhukhali Police Station.

Couple held over killing child with disabilities

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A couple was arrested yesterday on charges of poisoning their two-year-old daughter with disabilities to death in Moulvibazar's Sreemangal upazila.

Rashed Mia and his wife Shapla Begum were held from Dakhin Shatul village of Habiganj Sadar upazila.

Aminul Islam, inspector (investigation) of Sreemangal Police Station, said Faria Jannat Milli was born with physical disabilities. Her parents became impatient while looking after her, he said. On May 17, the couple poisoned her. Faria died on the way to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital. After the incident, the couple fled, he added.

The next day, Wasir Mia, Faria's maternal grandfather, filed a case with Sreemangal Police Station against the two.

Binoy Bhushan Roy, OC (operations) of the police station, said during primary interrogation, the couple admitted to killing their daughter by poisoning her.

UN probing

FROM PAGE 1

Myanmar military and the Arakan Army, including increased violence and the destruction of property in Buthidaung Township," the IIMM said in a statement.

That violence, the team said, "has reportedly resulted in the displacement of thousands of mainly Rohingya civilians, and is also impacting on Rakhine and Hindu communities."

The AA said it had seized Buthidaung last week, the latest victory it has claimed against the junta in Rakhine state.

It said it had warned residents of the town to leave and had subsequently been "assisting people in moving to safer areas" but did not give any details.

But a joint statement released by several Rohingya organisations based abroad said earlier this week that AA fighters had forced Rohingya residents to leave Buthidaung and then burned and looted their homes.

It said the Rohingyas were then directed by the fighters into areas controlled by the AA.

The statement called for the AA to end "forced displacement and human rights violations" against the Rohingyas.

The IIMM was established by the UN Human Rights Council in 2018 to collect evidence of the most serious international crimes and prepare files for criminal prosecution.

Beyond Rakhine, it said yesterday that it was also collecting evidence of "potential serious international crimes committed in other parts of Myanmar as conflict continues to increase across the country".

The team highlighted that they had been mandated to investigate "the most serious international crimes in Myanmar regardless of the affiliation of the perpetrators".

Low in Bay

FROM PAGE 12

to come closer to the coast and proceed with caution until further notice. They have also been advised not to venture out to the deep sea, said the special bulletin.

Rain or thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at some places in Chattogram and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places in Dhaka, Khulna and Barishal divisions in the next 24 hours from 9:00am today.

The weather may remain mainly dry with a temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere in the country, according to the Met.

Meanwhile, Sitakunda recorded the highest temperature - 37.8 degree Celsius - while it was 28 degree Celsius in Dhaka yesterday.

The Indian Met department also announced that the cyclonic storm brewing the Bay is likely to reach the coasts of Bangladesh and West Bengal on Sunday as a severe cyclonic storm.

However, various weather forecast models differ on the exact landfall point of cyclone Remal, from the coast of Bangladesh to the coasts of the eastern states of West Bengal and Odisha.

Banking sector being abused

FROM PAGE 1
PRESSURE ON BB

Former BB governor Salahuddin Ahmed said recent policy measures to hike the interest rate and exchange rate have put pressure on people.

Frequent policy changes by the central bank created volatility in the market, he mentioned.

When all countries devalued their currencies, Bangladesh kept the value of the taka up. Recently it devalued the currency all on a sudden, which impacted the market, he pointed out.

On the policy of loan rescheduling, he said once the businesspeople could reschedule their loans by making 20 percent down payment. Now, they

pay only 2 percent.

The former governor said the banking regulator has become a "cooperative society" due to pressure from influential quarters.

Anisul Islam Mahmud, deputy leader of the opposition in parliament, said the forming of asset management companies would not help reduce bad loans.

MA Mannan, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the planning ministry, said the central bank should be cautious about giving licences to new banks.

Mohammad Muslim Chowdhury, comptroller and auditor general of Bangladesh, said there was no need

to help the ailing banks to stay afloat. He said offshore banking should come under the scanner.

Public asset management companies should not be formed with the aim of reducing bad loans as they may create more problems than they solve, said Fahmida Khatun in her paper.

Mohammed Nurul Amin, former chairman of the Association of Bankers Bangladesh (ABB), journalist Syed Ishtiaque Reza, among others, spoke.

CPD distinguished fellow Mustafizur Rahman chaired the session.

Feud over gold stash behind murder

FROM PAGE 1

Sometime last year, Azim told his partner that he wanted a bigger cut of the money, according to sources in the Detective Branch and an intelligence agency.

"Aktaruzzaman snubbed Azim's proposal, and it created a rift between the two," said an intelligence officer.

"The partnership hit rock bottom after Azim received two stashes worth more than Tk 100 crore, but did not deliver them," said the officer involved in the investigation.

Aktaruzzaman then started asking Azim for the money and recruited other people who could make the deliveries, said the investigators.

"The duo met several times in the last six months to settle the matter, and Azim persistently refused to pay Aktaruzzaman. The latter then decided to have him killed," an investigator said, citing information given by arrested suspects.

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12 and stayed the night at a friend's house. The following day, he left, saying he was going to see a doctor. He did not return, and the friend received a couple of texts from his mobile phone that said there was no need to call him.

On Wednesday, India and Bangladesh police said the MP was murdered in a flat in New Town, Kolkata.

Talking to reporters yesterday, Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said, "The killers dismembered the body in such a way that it would be tough to identify it as human remains."

"They planned the murder two to three months ago and held multiple meetings at Aktaruzzaman's flats in Gulshan and Bashundhara. The suspects could not do it here because of DMP's vigilance."

As they were aware that the lawmaker often visited Kolkata, they made a fresh plan and rented a flat there on April 25, Harun said, quoting the arrested suspects.

"On April 30, Aktaruzzaman, his girlfriend, and Amanullah, the hitman, flew to Kolkata and went to the flat in New Town area. On May 13, when Azim left his friend Gopal Biswas's house, a suspect named Foyzal picked him up in a white car

and took him to the flat.

"The lawmaker entered the flat around 2:51pm, and the suspects executed their plan within the next half an hour. They kept Azim's phone active and sent messages to different people to fool the law enforcers."

On May 15, Amanullah and Aktaruzzaman's girlfriend returned

"Azim-Aktaruzzaman partnership hit rock bottom after Azim received two stashes worth more than Tk 100 crore, but did not have them delivered to the designated location."

An intelligence officer says on condition of anonymity

TIMELINE

MAY 15: Gopal receives message from Azim's phone, saying, "I have reached Delhi. VIPs are with me, no need to call me."

MAY 16: Azim's PS gets a call from Azim's phone; fails to answer it

MAY 17: Azim's daughter tells Gopal her father is traceless

MAY 18: Gopal files a GD with Borah Nagar Police Station

MAY 19: Azim's daughter meets DB chief

MAY 21: Bangladesh home minister says something bad may have happened to Azim

MAY 22: Minister says Azim was killed in a Kolkata flat; body not found

MAY 22: Azim's daughter files abduction case

MAY 23: Three CID officials from West Bengal arrives in Dhaka

MAY 23: West Bengal police detains Bangladeshi national Zubair, a suspect

The man who 'masterminded the murder'

FROM PAGE 1

A local of Kotchandpur, who knew Akhtaruzzaman and Azim, claimed that the two had been friends since childhood and eventually got involved in gold smuggling to India and hundi, an illegal international money transferring channel.

Akhtaruzzaman was also involved in yaba and crystal meth dealing at home and abroad, claimed people who claim to know him.

He rented flats in Gulshan, Baridhara, and Bashundhara areas in Dhaka, New Town in Kolkata, and in Brooklyn, New York, they said, adding that he used to ship drugs to the US from Dhaka.

Following a feud with Azim over gold smuggling and hundi, Akhtaruzzaman planned to murder Azim and hired a hitman for Tk 5 crore, said sources in intelligence agencies in Dhaka and Kolkata.

He rented a luxury flat in New Town of Kolkata last year, said sources in Kolkata.

Akhtaruzzaman, his girlfriend Celesty Rahman, and "hitman Amanullah" flew to Kolkata from Bangladesh on April 30, according to the DB. He chalked out how Azim would be murdered and returned to

Bangladesh on May 10, the DB said.

On May 20, he went to the US via Delhi and Kathmandu, sources said.

Talking to a Bangladeshi TV channel, Akhtaruzzaman claimed that he was not involved in the murder and that he was in Dhaka when Azim was killed in Kolkata. He claimed that he learnt about Azim going missing reading newspapers in Dhaka.

He said Azim visited his Kolkata flat several times when he went to Kolkata for treatment.

"I gave him [Azim] the keys to my flat."

"...My lawyer advised me not to talk to anyone on this matter... I came to the US as I think I will not get justice in Bangladesh. I came to this country as there is legal protection here. If the police have any documents or evidence, they should place it here [US], he said.

Asked about Azim being killed in his flat, he said, "Do you think I will have a murder committed in my own flat? Am I that stupid?"

Enquired about hiring a hitman, he said, "In Bangladesh, people say many things. Where will I get that kind of money?"

'The executor of the plot'

FROM PAGE 1

Malitha alias Dada Tapan used to live in Shimul's home. My father Sardar Abul Kashem was then the Damodar UP chairman. We caught Dada Tapan in 1991 at Shimul's home," said Selim Sardar.

After Tapan was killed in a "shootout" with law enforcers in June 2008, Shimul started extortion in Khulna, Bagerhat, Narail, Jashore, and some other south-western districts, said locals.

Selim said Shimul and his associates killed his father in 1998 when he was in a meeting with the thana nirbahi officer. He was arrested in 2000 over the murder and remained in jail till 2013.

From behind bars, Shimul had Selim's brother and then UP chairman Sardar Abu Sayeed Badal killed in 2010, Selim claimed.

Selim also said he and his brother Sardar Alauddin Mithu were witnesses in the murder cases and that was why Shimul and his men also killed Mithu on May 25, 2017.

"We filed a case over Mithu's murder accusing unidentified people, fearing reprisal from Shimul, but police submitted a charge sheet naming Shimul as the prime accused in 2018," Selim added.

Shimul's wife Sabina Yasmin is currently a member of Khulna Zilla Parishad and his brother Sharif Mohammad Bhuiyan alias Shiplu Bhuiyan is now the chairman of Damodar union.

In 2018, Shimul had a fake birth

certificate made and used it to get an NID card with the fake name Sayed Amanullah. He then got a passport, detectives said.

After police arrested him in Dhaka on Tuesday, Shimul admitted that he travelled to India using that passport.

Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (DB) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, yesterday said the detectives were investigating how he managed the passport.

Shimul was a student of Bangla at Rajshahi University. Locals in Phultala said Shimul, when he was a student, used to travel to Jhenaidah from Rajshahi to meet Tapan.

Shimul's studies came to an end after he was sentenced for the murder of Imran Gazi. He then joined the extremist outfit Janajuddha and was in charge of the outfit's activities in Khulna region. The extremists dominated the Khulna region until 2010.

According to intelligence sources, Shimul had links with extremists Abdur Rashid Tapu, Shailen, and Debu.

According to the DB, the mastermind behind the lawmaker's murder, Aktaruzzaman, hired Shimul as a hitman for Tk 5 crore.

Shimul flew to Kolkata with Aktaruzzaman and stayed in Aktaruzzaman's flat in New Town of Kolkata.

When the MP entered the flat on May 13, Shimul with other suspects killed him.